

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

April 23, 2014

Members:

Chester: Edmund Meehan *
Clinton: Willie Fritz
Cromwell: Jonathan Sistare
Deep River: Richard Smith
Durham: Laura Francis *
East Haddam: Mark Walter *
East Hampton: Michael Maniscalco *
Essex: Norm Needleman
Haddam: Melissa Schlag *
Killingworth: Cathy Iino *
Lyme: Ralph Eno
Middlefield: Jon Brayshaw *
Middletown: Daniel Drew
Old Lyme: Bonnie Reemsnyder
Old Saybrook: Carl Fortuna *
Portland: Susan Bransfield *
Westbrook: Noel Bishop *
CT Dept. of Transportation: Edgar Wynkoop *
Estuary Transit District: Joe Comerford
Middletown Area Transit: Andrew Chiaravallo *
Middlesex Chamber of Commerce: Jeff Pugliese *

Others Present:

Deanna Rhodes, Portland Town Planner
John Guskowski
Thad King, Chatham Health District
Catherine Rees, Community Benefits, Middlesex Hospital
Susan Dubb, Chatham Health District

* Members Present

Staff Present:

Jean Davies
Judy Snyder
Rob Haramut
Torrance Downes
Janice Ehle/Meyer
Erin Bodan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Cathy Iino called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. at the offices of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments in Essex.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 27TH MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion of Ed Meehan, seconded by Melissa Schlag, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2014 meeting as amended.

Laura Francis asked if the moratorium was still in effect for the towns not to request work from the RiverCOG. Jean Davies stated that it is not a moratorium but a priority work list to try and balance priority jobs between Jean and Linda's obligations.

Ms. Davies has discussed with Dan Morley, OPM, the town's deadlines for updated their POCD and the submittal to the state. The towns have to be in compliance by June 2015. Ms. Davies stated that the towns of Lyme and Durham are critical followed by Essex. These towns have to start revising their plans immediately to meet the June 2015 deadline. Ms. Davies stated that the Regional POCD does not have a deadline.

3. CHATHAM HEALTH DISTRICT PRESENTATION

Catherine Rees, Manager of Community Benefits, Middlesex Hospital, spoke about a report entitled "Community Health Needs Assessment" that the Middlesex County Coalition on Community Wellness has prepared. The Middlesex County Coalition of Community Wellness is a countywide health focus work group. The results of the assessment are three priority areas: 1) working on a tobacco free park toolkit; 2) focusing on hypertension; and, 3) focusing on social and emotional wellness. Each of these priority areas has work groups from coalition members.

Sue Dubbs, Chatham Health District, presented the booklet "Making Your Parks Tobacco Free". This "toolkit" has a wealth of information which includes helpful hints on how to quit smoking, organizations that can help quitting, health facts, environmental impact and impact on the youth. There is also a list of towns that have adopted a no tobacco zone ordinance, along with

organizations and businesses that participate in this program and ways to alert the public to this health hazard.

4. AUDITOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Ed Meehan stated that the RFP went out to auditing firms and two firms replied, Michaud Accavallo Woodbridge and Cusano, LLC (MAWC) and Gothie, Hoyt, Filippetti and Malaghan, LLC. The executive committee will review the references and make a recommendation to the COG at this next meeting. This item will be voted on at the May meeting.

5. LEGISLATOR UPDATE

Laura Francis stated that the water bill is still alive and it is thought that the EMS bill will pass. The newspaper bill is uncertain and concerns with the subdivision bill were expressed. It is hoped that the appropriation budget will pass.

6. SHARED SERVICES – RPIP FORECAST – PERMITTING

Jean Davies stated that the RPIP grants are divided with part of the monies going to the nutmeg network and the other part promoting shared services on a regional basis. She said that this is really early to bring this up because the RPIP grant usually comes up in December for funding, but some members have asked about the on-line permitting options and the pavement management systems with the software. She said that anyone that was interested in exploring the options to apply for a RPIP grant for shared services could start now in preparation for a grant. Carl Fortuna stated that Old Saybrook is already working on this and he could offer a resource. Mr. Fortuna, Noel Bishop and Susan Bransfield volunteered to serve.

Laura Francis asked if any of the towns have ordinances or is it illegal to plant trees near power lines. It was stated there are new cutting standards. Ms. Davies will look into available grants for the best practices and inventory.

7. 2013 RPIP PROJECT – ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

Jean Davies stated that some towns have returned their chart filled-in with names of people that would be interested in joining the economic committee. The members of the LCRV Economic Organizational COG Subcommittee are: Susan Bransfield (Portland), Laura Francis (Durham), Bonnie Reemsnyder (Old Lyme), Kip Bergstrom (DECD), Jeff Pugliese (Middlesex Chamber of Commerce), Cathy Lezon and Pat Bendzas (NU Economic Development). RiverCOG members need to get people in the region who will have the talent and out of the box thinking to create economic growth strategy in the region. The committee will meet to develop an RFQ for hiring

a consultant for the COG to do a lower Connecticut economic growth plan which is part of the RPIP grant. This committee will be a subcommittee of the COG.

8. AGRICULTURAL GRANT ACCEPTANCE - RESOLUTION

Janice Ehle/Meyer stated that the RiverCOG has received a \$42,000 grant for 1) a study on food distribution of farm to market production; 2) agriculture brochures for the towns; 3) an agricultural conference; and, 4) digital media projects. The in-kind portion of this grant will be \$22,000. The Agricultural Council meets monthly at the RiverCOG.

Upon motion of Noel Bishop, seconded by Susan Bransfield, it was unanimously voted to approve the Agriculture Viability Grant Resolution (attachment #1).

9. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cathy Iino updated the members on the financial administrator position. The RiverCOG had received 42 applications out of which 5 will be interviewed. The interviews will be conducted by Jean Davies, Dorothy Papp, Joe Wollack, and Bonnie Reemsnyder between April 24th and May 5th with a start date no later than June 1st.

Ed Meehan presented a draft description for the Executive Director's position. After review the members had several comments and ideas: 1) meet and review description with other RPA and COG executive directors in May; 2) person needs business experience; 3) longevity, looking at the long range picture; 4) Innovative thinker; and 5) develop a set of questions to be asked at the interviews. Several members thought that hiring a consultant to do all or part of the process would be beneficial. Susan Bransfield and Ed Meehan stated that two months ago the members did not want a consultant involved. Carl Fortuna stated that a consultant could be hired to do as little or as much as the board wants. Michael Maniscalco said that consultants need to be supervised closely. Mark Walter said that this is a political position with the state legislators. Ms. Bransfield recommended that this issue be put on the May agenda as an item so other board members would be aware this topic would be discussed. Laura Francis asked if another town would have a RFQ similar to this to be used as a guideline. Mr. Maniscalco stated that Rocky Hill had an RFQ for a town manager recently.

The executive/personnel committee is expecting to meet several times before the May RiverCOG meeting. Ms. Francis, Mr. Bishop and Mr. Manscalco volunteered to attend to provide input. The meetings are open to anyone interested in the executive director search.

Ed Meehan presented a resolution that states in the absence of the executive director Jean Davies, Acting Director has full bank account management and signatory authority and upon the return of the executive director Jean Davies will retain her signatory powers.

Upon motion of Laura Francis, seconded by Michael Maniscalco, it was unanimously voted to approve the Resolution to allow Acting Director Jean Davies signatory authority (attachment #2).

10. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jean Davies said that the RPC proposed legislation

Jean Davies stated that the Midstate Natural Hazardous Mitigation Plan has been reviewed by the FEMA and there were very few revisions. Jeremy DiCarli has made those revisions and has returned it to FEMA for final review. When the plan is returned it needs a formal adoption ASAP by all of the eight towns that were Midstate. Mr. DeCarli will be contacting the towns with the steps to follow for the process of adopting of the plan. It will require a town meeting and a council meeting for the City of Middletown for adoption. If any of the towns had severe storm damage this plan needs to be in place to receive any monies. Ms. Davies is hopeful that the plan will be at FEMA by June with an adoption with summer.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Jean Davies went to the Middletown budget hearing Tuesday night and all went well.

Jean Davies distributed a POCD assist matrix for the towns that need to update their plans (attachment #3). The plans for Portland, East Hampton and Old Saybrook need to be updated by 2016. Some towns like Portland have requested our services already. Clinton, Cromwell, and Deep River plans need to be updated by 2017.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Noel Bishop, seconded by Laura Francis, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:04 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder
Recording Secretary